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ABSTRACT

Understanding how to respond to cultural diversity is one key to successful interaction with young children and their families. This book for early childhood professionals introduces the strategy of Skilled Dialogue, a field-tested model for respectful, reciprocal, and responsive interaction that honors cultural beliefs and values, and that will allow practitioners to strengthen their relationships with children and families and better address developmental and educational goals. Following an introduction that defines key terms, the book is organized into three sections. Chapters in Section 1 explore core concepts related to the challenge of communication and interaction across diverse cultural parameters, and introduce the concept of cultural competency as a response, through the strategy of Skilled Dialogue. Chapters in Section 2 further describe the Skilled Dialogue process, specifically its foundational beliefs, characteristic qualities, and component skills. Chapters in Section 3 extend the previous discussions of Skilled Dialogue, presenting vignettes to illustrate practical applications of the strategy with children and families in early childhood settings. The book's four appendices include an essay, "Trauma from a Cultural Perspective" (Dianne Macpherson); an essay, "Looking Closer" (Jon Wilson) on not making assumptions about family circumstances; photocopiable materials such as a critical incident analysis sheet and a home language usage profile; and guidelines for using an interpreter/translator during test administration. (Contains 156 references.) (HTH)

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